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## Interview with Jackson Wayne Ashley (MSS 707)

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4/9/12

Transcript of Interview of Dr. Wayne Ashley  
Home of Dr. Wayne Ashley

LeSieur: Alright, and I'm going to sit this, I think it will be alright if I sit it here. So it is the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, I'm sitting here with Dr. Wayne Ashley and we're going to talk about Kyrock. It is 5:00. Alright, so starting off, just, can you kind of briefly tell me about your personal affiliations with Kyrock?

Ashley: Well, I was born there. And I lived in a place called, a little, what you'd, I guess you'd call a mining camp called Woodside. And the reason I called it a mining camp, Kyrock Asphalt Company owned all them little houses. They were just throwed up in terms of today's construction and it was just a little collection, I bet they wasn't 15 houses in Woodside.

LeSieur: So you grew up in Woodside, what about Ridgedale, do you know about how many houses were there? About the same?

Ashley: No, I've been there, and it was up on the hill like, I was there after it all closed down more cause I came back out of service and worked for Kyrock for a while reading the water meters and going around to each one of the individual houses that was still being used and but as far as my early affiliation with Ridgedale I didn't have any. I knew it was there.

LeSieur: But you didn't, you never went over there or anything?

Ashley: And really, I think I can remember, some things at Woodside when I was four year old and the reason I think, you know, sometimes you get mixed up and you remember things people told you and you think you remember them, but I can remember those houses and I can remember going to Sunday school at church up on the hill because the, I guess one of the things that I was the most proud of, they had a little Sunday school effort and they gave us a little bulletin, you know, like you've seen the little church bulletins, it had a little story on it and I treasured that because we didn't really have reading material in the house, we were just subsistent. And we didn't have books and we didn't have comic books and we didn't have encyclopedias or dictionaries or anything like that and I would really treasure that little 'ol church bulletin. Now something I didn't know until later when we started doing the work on this book, my mother, her name was Inez, she was a reporter for that Methodist church that was up on the hill. And she would write little articles like, what was that one in here, and give to the church bulletin, the big one that was published in Louisville and brought back. And I didn't know she was even affiliated with it. I knew she took us to Sunday school.

LeSieur: Okay, well on that note, let's start, you know, I've got a whole list of questions here about the church, so you actually attended the church? I'm assuming...

Ashley: Yeah, I remember attending only the Sunday school part. I'm sure we went to the other, but that's, I don't remember the church services. But I was just four, going on five.

LeSieur: Tell me, about you know, a typical Sunday school service at the church, what would it be like, you know, you'd get to church, and...

Ashley: Well, I remember, going up those steps, climbing those steps, and going to Sunday school class and I can't remember anything that happened after the Sunday school class. Now I thought many times that we might've gone home after Sunday school and not stayed for the regular church service.

LeSieur: So, when, you know, when would you have, when did you stop going to church there, did you move or...

Ashley: Well, we moved. I went to...

LeSieur: I just want to check the recording.

Ashley: Am I getting away from it?

LeSieur: No, I was just making sure it was still going.

Ashley: I went to, to Kyrock school for the kindygarten, not I went to the Kyrock kindygarten, and then I went to the school for the 1<sup>st</sup>, when I was 5 year old and I went from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade the first year.

LeSieur: Really? So you skipped a year?

Ashley: So I started, actually, I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade when I was 6.

LeSieur: Oh, wow.

Ashley: And that's the reason I was at Western, I started to Western when I was 15.

LeSieur: Oh goodness!

Ashley: And I had my teaching certificate (mumble) when I was 18. So what we did, we bought this place here. My mother's father passed away and in the settlement of the estate they decided to buy this little farm. It was a little farm at that time, it was, we called it a farm. It was about 32 acres. So I moved from up there, I would say somewhere between 6 and 7 year old.

LeSieur: Oh, okay. So that's pretty much where you live right now.

Ashley: Yeah, it's the spot. I built this house on the spot.

LeSieur: Okay. Yeah, Matt was telling me that the white house over here, is that where your sister lived, is that right?

Ashley: Yeah, my older sister.

LeSieur: Okay. Okay, well, back to the church. You said you went to Sunday school there, so you don't remember any other types of services there?

Ashley: I remember Christmas time.

LeSieur: Okay.

Ashley: Because, that was a big thing. Carmichael, which I'm sure you're familiar with the name, he fixed a treat bag for everybody on top of that hill. It was a little sack that had apples and orange, you know, fruit, candy, you know, stuff you normally see, not toys, edible.

LeSieur: But probably stuff you all really enjoyed getting at the time, right?

Ashley: And we would go, we wouldn't have missed that for anything. Because everybody went and it was a Christmas holiday, it really was.

LeSieur: Okay.

Ashley: And that was about the extent of my church, was Sunday school and that thing at Christmas time.

LeSieur: Okay, do you remember kind of what the church looked like?

Ashley: I can get a vague picture as you go up a whole, a big flight of stairs, and it was looking out over the valley. I don't know whether that was Ridgedale, is that, was that Ridgedale...it was looking out over Ridgedale if you got up and faced the front of the building and you faced back you could see, you could see another little mining camp, well, houses like ours except more of them. They was more than there was at Woodside.

LeSieur: So there were more houses in Ridgedale than there were at Woodside?

Ashley: Cause they were on both sides of the road.

LeSieur: Okay. That's interesting. Now, as far as the church, was it just one room, or was there like a back room?

Ashley: No, it was just one room the best I can remember.

LeSieur: Okay. And, did they, I've heard that they used a coal stove, is that, they would've had like a coal stove connected to a chimney....

Ashley: Well I don't remember the coal stove there, but they used one because when I come down here they were still using them out here, the coal stove.

LeSieur: Okay.

Ashley: Usually, usually that coal stove was located in about the center of the building and whoever stoked it always kept the building too hot.

LeSieur: Okay, so it was really warm in there.

Ashley: Yeah, it was warm in there.

LeSieur: Well, I guess that's better than being cold in the winter time?

Ashley: Well, might've been a subtle reminder of where it's gonna be hot somewhere else, I don't know.

LeSieur: I like that, its funny.

Ashley: Well, I come up with those kind of quips.

LeSieur: No, that's what I like to hear (laughter). Well, let me, one more thing about the church. One thing I've noticed in doing archaeology up there is a lot of signatures on the rock where the steps would've been, did you know anything about that, did you carve your name on the rock or did you know anybody that did?

Ashley: No, I went to high school just on past that church you know where? And I imagine those carvings were probably made by high school students.

LeSieur: Okay, just kind of something to do, right?

Ashley: Cause we had to, you know, wait for the bus down there. I do remember in winter time walking home from school while I was still at river, Woodside, because I remember the cold. My sister next to me, it was real cold, and it was so cold they kept me at home that day and about time for school to be out, my dad took a blanket, cause he didn't work in the winter time, that was seasonal. And he walked to towards the school 'til he found Elise coming home and he come in carrying her wrapped up in a blanket, it was so cold.

LeSieur: Okay, that cold?

Ashley: So, I do remember that, but I guess because I'd never seen something like that before. She was older, 21 months older than I am. We went through school together.

LeSieur: Okay, well let's move from the church then to, lets talk about the school systems. Where, you know, in relationship to the church, I mean, you can think about where the church is, were the schools located right behind that, or were they somewhere else...

Ashley: You went right past, the church would've been up here on your left and you went by it and around a little curve and started down the hill toward the river, but it was all that, it was farther back, but it was after you passed the church, but it wasn't anymore than a quarter of a mile, it might not have been that much.

LeSieur: Now what I'm going to do is I'm going to kind of draw a little map here. So say we've got the church right up here and we've got Ridgedale here and I'm kind of backwards from you, so let me turn around here. And I'm just doing this to try and get an idea of where things were. So we've got Ridgedale right there, this is the church, and then the road came from Woodside over there...

Ashley: Now there's a road that come from Sweeden that goes down through there and went right by where the church was.

LeSieur: Okay, so this...

Ashley: It split Ridgedale.

LeSieur: Sweeden, and you said it split through Ridgedale?

Ashley: it went right through. Ridgedale had houses on both sides of the road, and it was closer to the church, it was right down through here.

LeSieur: Okay, so kind of like that.

Ashley: Now, when I was in high school...

LeSieur: Here, I'm going to let you draw it actually.

Ashley: When I was in high school, they was a place right along here where the bus would turn around. It didn't come all the way down to the building. So let's say this is the bus. Later, years later, in high school, but if you passed that, then it started going down the hill towards the river. Now the river's down here, but the school building was sitting right here.

LeSieur: So it was on the opposite side of the road as then church then?

Ashley: it was on the opposite. Right side of the road. And they was two buildings, one was used for a high school later and one was used for a elementary school. On top of this building was a lodge hall where the men, the men had their, it wasn't the masons, I don't know what kind of lodge it was, but this was a two-story building with steps going up the side of it, to a lodge hall. And if you followed this on around, like this, over here's your canal, and over here's your river, and here's your commissary, and here's the road that goes up the hill.

LeSieur: Okay, I'm going to mark these things while you're...

Ashley: You've been up that hill?

LeSieur: Oh yeah, we've walked all through the...

Ashley: If you went up to the top of this hill, if you looked off to your left was the Carmichael house over here. And when I was four, they was a pre-school there it was called the kindygarten. It was here and I don't know for sure whether it was part of the hotel or not, but there was a hotel in here and if you, present day, if you went on up, you would have found, later on, you would have found a baseball diamond here for the high school. Have you ever been up there?

LeSieur: I haven't. I've actually looked for that, but I haven't....

Ashley: Its probably grewed up.

LeSieur: Yeah, it's real, now would that be in the field there, probably like...

Ashley: its in the field after you get outside of the where the hotel was and the buildings.

LeSieur: is that the same field where, like, I'm trying to think, the field that is by the canal that Bill Layne owns now, is that where...

Ashley: No, its up at the top of the hill. And about now that road goes ahead and comes out on Lincoln road.

LeSieur: Yeah, okay, so that's way up there. Let me mark all of this. You said there was a lodge on top. And this would've been the high school?

Ashley: That was, at my time, it would've been the high school. But at the early time, this was my elementary. See I went back there after we moved here, I went back here for high school. And I graduated in 1947, so that, I had two stints, I had one trip when I was young and just elementary school we moved down here and I finished elementary here and then when I went to high school, I went back and finished high school here before they moved it out to the top, where it's at now.

LeSieur: Which is the elementary school, now, right?

Ashley: Huh?

LeSieur: That's the elementary school now?

Ashley: Yeah, it's whats the elementary school.

LeSieur: Okay, well one more thing I want you to draw on here is, now I know Woodside's gonna be over here somewhere, right?

Ashley: Yeah, now this road, up through Ridgedale, it came around, around this way and it came back this way and up here was Dr. Cornwell's office at the top of the hill. You know where Sweeden is. If you turn and go out that road now, see this is that road where Layne's store used to be, and it would go out right where his office used to be. And Woodside was just right in here. And Layne's had a store in this right after you pass this curve, right in here somewhere. They had a store there before they moved up to Sweeden.

LeSieur: Okay, well thank you for drawing that for me. You know, it always helps to have somebody's view on things, you know I know where some of these things are, but you know, like the baseball field, I would've had no idea where that was.

Ashley: Now, over in here, over in here was a quarry. And we used to go over there and watch those little 'ol Dinkies, you know, narrow track trains. The boys would go over there and would watch them hauling that rock to the crusher.

LeSieur: Okay, alright, let me ask you a couple of more questions.

Ashley: that's yours. (hands pen)

LeSieur: Oh, that is mine. I forget sometimes, I've got so many of them.

Ashley: I've got so many, I don't need anymore.

LeSieur: Okay, lets see. Okay, so we get where the schools were located, now were the schools, they would've been painted probably green and white, the same...

Ashley: I don't think they was painted, I believe they was covered with that old tar paper, we called it. And I doubt they was insulated. They was just like if you put walls in and you put some of that stuff down to keep your weeds down. They were just put down the sides. And it was heavy tarpaper. And it wasn't, it might've had a plank background, you know, open-like, something to nail to...

LeSieur: Like a clapboard, almost, and then the shingles put on the back?

Ashley: Yeah, except it would've been maybe pine planks or something. Cause you didn't find, you didn't find those big boards, sheets, at that time. And the basketball court, have you seen, you've seen a picture of it, I guess?

LeSieur: I've seen pictures of the tennis courts, but I...

Ashley: No, the basketball court was between those two buildings....

LeSieur: So, it would've been between these two buildings?

Ashley: Yeah, and it was outside and it was paved with asphalt. And this was the, here, one of these, this side, this side of the road ran down where you've probably been, the spring, I forget the name of the spring...

LeSieur: The sweet springs?

Ashley: The sweet springs that Butch was fooling with for a while. And if you lost the basketball and it took off over that hill, there was nothing to do but just hold up and wait until you went after your ball. And also, if you fell on that asphalt, it wasn't no bruise, it was a (mumble) scratch.

LeSieur: Oh, I bet, scratch up your knee real good.

Ashley: You saw a picture of our ball team in that book?

LeSieur: Yeah, I've seen some good pictures of them. Okay, well back onto school and you just told me one, but do you have any fun stories from when you were in school there that you remember?

Ashley: Any what?

LeSieur: Any fun or memorable stories from when you were in school, you know, people, or, you know...

Ashley: Well, (mumble) traumatic experience, when I was little. The principal was R.A. Demumbrun. Do you, you wouldn't know him, but you've heard of him. And we had a boy there, and I won't say his name. He was incorrigible. And he picked up a, he picked up the edge of a seat one day, you know how those seats folded up, that metal piece, that, he picked that up and hit him...

LeSieur: Hit the principal in the head with it?

Ashley: Hit the principal and I remember the, he had on a white shirt always, the blood on his shirt was red and they got a, he was disciplining him for some reason. So I won't say his name, but...

LeSieur: Oh no, that's fine.

Ashley: But his family, or his descendants probably wouldn't like to hear it...

LeSieur: Yeah, probably bad stories like that. Was school, I mean, did you, was it fun, I mean, did you like school or?

Ashley: It was so great, cause see, we didn't have any entertainment to speak of at home. I read every book in the library. I went through the 1<sup>st</sup> three grade the 1<sup>st</sup> year and then I had the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and I get the teachers mixed up sometimes, but I had Zelda Doyle and I had Willie Wells, you may remember the Wells...

LeSieur: I've heard the name...

Ashley: And, I've had, in high school, later on, I can remember them well, but back in the early, when I was young, we came down here and I went to Steep Holler, you know where Steep Holler is?

LeSieur: yeah.

Ashley: And I would've been in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. I got out there, they didn't have a 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

LeSieur: Really?

Ashley: Cause see, they didn't have enough students, they would alternate years. And so instead of putting me back in the 4<sup>th</sup>, cause I always had perfect grades, I'm not bragging, it's just a fact, they moved me up to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. So I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade while before I was 8 years old.

LeSieur: Wow. So it, one thing I'm kind of gathering is that, and I've heard this before, is that the education, they probably had a really good education system for the time, especially since...

Ashley: For the time, at Kyrock, I had, I believe 4 maths, I had general arithmetic and I had algebra 1, 2, and geometry.

LeSieur: Wow, that's...

Ashley: And, when I went to Western, I didn't have any trouble with the math, I didn't go high enough in the math to have calculus and all that that would've give me trouble. I did take trig and suffered through it, cause I had no background in trig, but I made it through it fine and I had general science, biology, agriculture in the science field. And I was well prepared in the basics to go to Western, when I was 15, but I don't recommend it. I went when the veterans were coming back from the World War II and some of the classes was 120-150 people in them.

LeSieur: Oh, goodness, I bet that was a big change for you.

Ashley: And there I sat, I didn't weigh a 100 pounds. I sit in the middle of them like a little kid. But I made the grade that some of them flunked on. And so I held on.

LeSieur: So do you feel like, you know the Kyrock schools really helped prepare you for Western?

Ashley: Oh, it. I don't know what I would've done if I hadn't had the basics. But I had the basics and the basic intellect to do it.

LeSieur: Okay, well that's cool. I mean, you don't hear a lot of people going to college when they're 15, so...

Ashley: No, see what I did, I taught school when I was 18. My first year, because Dad was having a hard time putting us through school. Money wasn't plentiful then. And I got tired when I, soon as I got to where I could work, I started teaching.

LeSieur: You wanted to go to work. Okay.

Ashley: I had three years of college. Well, while I was in college, or while I was teaching my first year at Bee Spring, I was just draft-age. And I didn't want the army, I'd always visualized that I wanted Navy or Air Force, so I volunteered and joined the Navy for four years.

LeSieur: Oh, okay, so you were gone for a while then?

Ashley: So, I was out of school for a while. And then I came back out of the Navy on the GI bill, finished my bachelor and masters. And then, I worked for several years as a teacher and I decided that it was taking us all summer without work, it would take us a whole school year to get caught up again. And so I quit, well I got a job with the state dept. of education as a supervisor and from there I decided to get my Doctorate. So I got my doctorate and UK in '71, wrote a grant, federal grant for I believe it was \$500,000 and in vocational guidance, brought it back to Western, and said, here, I got the grant, but I need a sponsor. Well, you can imagine, Western's not gonna turn down a grant. So I got a job and brought them a grant, and I taught there, counting the 5 year, after I retired I taught 5 years part-time. I got, come back and taught 17 years.

LeSieur: What did you teach?

Ashley: Guidance and counseling in the graduate program.

LeSieur: Okay.

Ashley: So I taught, I had 32 years of teaching experience counting the military time. Which if I hadn't have counted that, I would've had 28 years actual teaching. I could count the military time.

LeSieur: Yeah.

Ashley: So I retired when I was 51.

LeSieur: Oh, wow.

Ashley: And, I've been retired 51, how many years is that, that's 49 and 12, no I was 51. I retired, I went there in '71, I retired in '85 completely. It would've been '80, partially. So I was retired 20 years and 12, I've been retired 32 years.

LeSieur: Wow. Have you enjoyed it? (Laughter)

Ashley: Yeah, cause I came back after retirement and played golf 4 and 5 days a week, for a long time.

LeSieur: Well, I hear that's good for the soul. Alright, well, we've got a nice background on the education system and obviously, you've demonstrated where it got you. You know, you've had a lot of experience with the education system, so, lets move and talk about just what you remember, its down, I think the, down here, can you tell me about your house, at Kyrock, like where you were born and grew up, I guess.

Ashley: Yeah, they was a living room, well, we called it a living room, but it had the bed for the kids in it. And they was a bedroom for the parents and they was a little kitchen built on like a lean-to. And they was a front porch. There was two doors on the front porch, one went into the main part of the house, where the kids slept, and the other went into the kitchen from the porch. So it was surely, it was really three major rooms, but the kitchen was awful small, it was just a lean-to kitchen, just like you tack-on something.

LeSieur: Did you all...

Ashley: That was the Woodside house.

LeSieur: Okay. Would've the houses have all looked the same?

Ashley: They was all alike.

LeSieur: They were all alike. And would they have been the same, kind of built like the school was, or were they painted any color or was it just that clapboard?

Ashley: They was just that clapboard, they was just that tarpaper, and they wasn't insulated and it was cold in the winter time.

LeSieur: yeah, yeah, I bet.

Ashley: And I can remember, (coughs), excuse me, my mom would paper the walls but it wasn't a glue-type paper. It was where you used carpet tacks. It was a heavy paper and we would take strips of that paper and cut them into little squares about that big, put a tack through the middle of it and then drive that tack in to hold the paper up. Because glue would never had held it up.

LeSieur: Yeah. Well, probably with it being cold and stuff.

Ashley: And that helped a lot on a lot of the cold, too. But we had a wood, a coal stove and Dad kept it so hot to keep the rest of the house warm one of the rooms we would call it today insufferable almost. But we got used to it. And they wasn't any water running in the house, but they was a hydrant outside the house that the company run water.

LeSieur: And that would've been probably run from the spring.

Ashley: I don't know where they got it. There was a great big tank, you know, so I imagine that it would've come out of that spring into the tank and to the different houses. But of course, there wasn't any indoor bathroom facilities. We had what you call a proverbial outhouse and along the bank of, along the road coming up to our house from off the main road, you know the lane and like there was a storm cellar, that I don't know whether the company built it or the people did that lived there. But if it was about to come up the least little bit of a storm, night or day, they headed us for that cellar.

LeSieur: So that wouldn't have been something that everybody had, it was sort of a community...

Ashley: This was sort of a community thing. And they's probably two or three of them in the thing, but I remember the one that we....

LeSieur: And what was it like?



Ashley: Just the regular cellar except it had a place to sit and best I remember there was shelves. If anybody wanted to put stuff up on the shelves, but I was so young, I despised it.

LeSieur: Yeah, that's what I was going to ask you, did it scare you, or...

Ashley: I didn't want to get out the bed and be hauled off to that cellar, I wasn't afraid of the storm, but they were. And, but we went. Until we came down here and when we came down here, that, well, we did have a cellar for a while (coughs) that was right at, up this road down here. Yeah, he did have a cellar. And they was a cellar under our house. We didn't use it because actually we was afraid to. If the house fell in on you, you'd had to have chopped your way out.

LeSieur: Now would all of the houses had cellars like that or was it just you all that...

Ashley: This house down here I'm talking about...

LeSieur: Oh, okay, I'm sorry.

Ashley: It was in the kitchen, you know a trapdoor. But it was a handy place to store your canned stuff.

LeSieur: Oh, yeah, I bet, like a pantry almost. So, as far as furniture goes, you said you had a coal stove, would you all have had a lot of furniture in your house, you said beds...

Ashley: Well, we just had beds, chairs, and tables, we didn't have anything extra.

LeSieur: Nothing, nothing like...

Ashley: We didn't have nothing like this.

LeSieur: No recliners...

Ashley: Rocking chair, straight chairs, necessities in the kitchen for enough plates and everything. Oh, I tell you another thing that I remember, that might be interesting. I don't know whether you want to know or not.

LeSieur: Oh, I'd like to hear anything.

Ashley: We were coming out of the depression. See I was born in '31 and the depression was just ending, maybe a little after '31 and people got what they called from the government, commodities. We got cheese, we got flour, we got beans, we got lard, and necessities. And on certain days of the week, the truck would come and deliver the commodities. Well, you've probably heard this before, Carmichael had a system to where during the winter time he issued what they called a script card. You're familiar with them?

LeSieur: Yeah, I've heard of the script cards.

Ashley: And they would carry you at the commissary all through the winter. You'd get what you had to have and they'd punch it. And they'd take it out of your check.

LeSieur: You'd pay for it once you started working again?

Ashley: When, if it hadn't been for Carmichael, a lot of people would've gone hungry. But the people in those camps, they didn't go hungry.

LeSieur: So you would say that during the depression, at least during the depression, life for people at Kyrock was pretty good, compared to other places?

Ashley: It was good compared to people in say some big towns, and other places where...

LeSieur: People were provided for...

Ashley: Where they didn't have employment. Carmichael saw to it. That they had their script card and there was stuff at the commissary for them to eat, plus the commodities. And Carmichael was, he was looked up to, like a quasi-god almost. Cause people really gave him their allegiance...

LeSieur: Just gonna check that, you keep talking, I'm just going to check this, okay.

Ashley: People really gave him their allegiance because they knew that he was making a way for them to exist during this time of post-depression. Of course the depression, the worst of it was over, but it was coming out of it, and that took some time.

LeSieur: So you would say that Mr. Carmichael, and of course, I've read this, but I just want your opinion on it, but you would say that he was a very well respected person in the community?

Ashley: Oh, he was the most respected person that I've ever been around.

LeSieur: Okay, so speaking about his character, he did a lot for the community?

Ashley: He did, what he did, he cared or at least his actions showed that he cared. (coughs) Because he saw it and made a way for his employees and at a time when they were hungry. I've heard my dad say that he worked during the off-season that he worked all day for a bushel of potatoes that was selling for a quarter a bushel. And a bushel of potatoes would feed a family for quite a while, see. And they'd cost a quarter and so he actually worked for the value of 25 cents a day. And now you could give a kid a quarter and he'd say, I want a dollar, or I want 5.

LeSieur: And that would've been what year probably?

Ashley: Oh, that would've been post-depression, right after we were coming out of it, '33 or '34, I guess.

LeSieur: Okay, well, we've just got, I've got a couple of more questions for you, I don't want to keep you too long. Do you, if you can, we're gonna draw another picture, if you don't mind. Can you kind of draw me, I'm going to let you do this one, maybe just draw a floorplan of what your house looked like, to the best you can remember.

Ashley: The best I can remember, there was a, it was high on this back end, they was a front porch, lets say this is the front porch, they was a door that went into the main room or the room that was the kids room.

LeSieur: The living room is where you all slept?

Ashley: And the kitchen was tacked on, here.

LeSieur: Okay.

Ashley: Now I'm not getting the right size.

LeSieur: That's okay.

Ashley: This was the kitchen. Now it was bigger than that. The porch was probably bigger than that. And then the house went back and it come straight across, this is the wall, and of course the roof, here's the roof. They was a window in the side here. See right here? And it seems like there was a window here, but I'm not sure.

LeSieur: So you don't remember...

Ashley: I don't think there was any window in the kitchen, there might have been on in the end. And they was a window here. And there was a door here that went into the other bedroom. This is Mom's, Mom and Dad's bedroom and this is where the kids, where we slept.

LeSieur: Where you all slept. So the house was pretty much just three rooms.

Ashley: It was just three rooms. But Dad used to, he had a big piece of metal and I don't know what, I don't know what it came off of, but he would lay that before time to go to bed, it was a long piece of metal, wasn't too thick, but it held heat, he would put that on top of the stove and it'd get hot and then he would wrap that in cloth, a quilt or something and he'd put that at the foot of the bed, because he knew by morning it was going to get cold in there.

LeSieur: And so that would keep the bed warm.

Ashley: That would keep the bed warm and your feet warm.

LeSieur: Well that's neat. Alright, well, moving on, you may or may not know a lot of what about, I asked you about the spring, you may not know a lot about that, but let me just ask you, I know you said that (phone rings), lets wait for that...

Ashley: Now I can't hear a regular phone, I have to use the speaker phone.

LeSieur: No, that's fine.

Ashley: She'll get it in there.

LeSieur: Well, we'll wait til that gets done to keep talking. Okay, I think we're done there. Okay, I know you said that the spring would've just been right across the road from the school.

Ashley: Well, it be down all the way to the bottom of the hill and out a little way.

LeSieur: Did you all ever go back there and get water to drink.

Ashley: Mmm-mm (negative).

LeSieur: Okay. So did...

Ashley: I've been back there several times.

LeSieur: Okay. Do you remember what it looked like?

Ashley: No. I know they was a lane across from the commissary where you could go up...

LeSieur: Where you could drive back there?

Ashley: I don't know whether you could drive back there or not.

LeSieur: Okay.

Ashley: You see, we didn't have a car.

LeSieur: You didn't. So you walked everywhere or rode the school bus, I guess.

(Matthew Wood enters and informs Dr. Ashley that he has a phone call.)

LeSieur: We can pause.

Ashley: Can you turn that off just a minute?

LeSieur: Yeah, I'd be glad to.

(Recording paused so Dr. Ashley could take phone call)

LeSieur: Okay, we had to pause the recording for a phone call, but we're started back up, it's 5:50 and let's see where we were. Alright, well lets move on to the next page, I've got a thing about the Carmichael house on there, I know, did you, were you ever friends with the Carmichael boys or did you...

Ashley: I had a, an early remembrance of the Carmichael house. When I was about 4 or 5 and I later when I came out of service I had to visit the Carmichael house when Pete lived, worked over there, and lived in that one room or two rooms. And I don't know whether or not its another one of those things where people tell you, I don't think it is. As little boys, they had a fence around the, they had a fence around the estate, have you seen any evidence of a fence?

LeSieur: Yeah, we've found a little bit of it, but we're still.

Ashley: Well, to my memory, they had a couple of big dogs that roamed inside the fence of the estate and we would go over there and look at the house or look at the lane that went up to the house and the dogs that would've been about when I was 4 or so and in kindergarten.

LeSieur: So do you, you know, I've heard and of course I've seen the house, and you've seen it since they moved, but I'm assuming for back when it was built, it was just something to see.

Ashley: I can't remember. I remember when it was vacated. It was practically vacated when I come out of service and started working for them. I would go there every month.

LeSieur: So Mr. Carmichael, I've read, he actually moved to Bowling Green at some point, right?

Ashley: Yeah, and Pete Wilson, I guess his name was. He was still living in the house when I came out of service. And we would go by there when we'd go to, well we did two things, we did the inventory (coughs) every month and we read the water meters for the company. And I would go over there and we would go in the kitchen there where Pete was and that's the only time I was ever even in the house. And I can't even, I can't even what it looks like.

LeSieur: Okay. Well lets see, I wrote down a couple of things while we were talking that I wanted to ask you about and then we'll be done. So you worked for Kyrock and you said that you went around and read the water meters. So at that point, were they supplying water to everybody in the community?

Ashley: No they was still some people lived in the houses.

LeSieur: What year would this have been, do you know?

Ashley: Well, lets see, I got out of the Navy in '55 and I went to work as a cost accountant. I had an office over in Brownsville. You know where their offices were? I had an office over there and I kept a daily cost sheet after it had been shut down.

LeSieur: So this was after the company had shut down. They quit mining but there was still people living around there?

Ashley: They was still people living around there.

LeSieur: Okay, well that kind of sparked something else, how long did people still live, I mean I know that there were people still living there until recently, like in the company houses, but did people just kind of pack up and leave like with the company or did I guess people stayed around then...

Ashley: I don't know whether they just let the live there or whether they had bought the place. The Cardwell's, they were still there when I was reading the meters. And very few.

LeSieur: That would be Julius, Madge's dad, Cardwell.

Ashley: (Affirmative) Everybody that lived in them houses had a dog, cause I was afraid of dogs. They'd come out barking like they was going to eat you up and I dreaded that day.

LeSieur: Something, always seems like there's something about, you know, people that read meters and dogs, you know they just don't like them or something. Alright, another thing, you mentioned the Sunday school bulletin. What was that bulletin called, did it have a name, seems like I remember the Messenger...

Ashley: I forget, but its in that book.

LeSieur: Its in that book. Okay, do you remember, I mean, what kind of information would it contain, I know you said that your mom ...

Ashley: Oh, they'd be some articles by some so called evangelists, they'd be some articles by church leaders, they'd be a column like the Gimlet over here has about neighborhoods, cause Mom used to write the one for our neighborhood.

LeSieur: So it was almost like a newspaper then. But with church kind of material.

Ashley: It was on the format of the Gimlet, except it was a church bulletin. And you'll find a picture of, you'll find some of the contents in that book, cause I saw my mother's thing in there.

LeSieur: Another thing that I wanted to ask you about, now, I've heard people refer to the schools, and this is just more along the lines of what you all called things, but I've heard people refer to the school as down the hill as opposed to the one that was up, you know, the new school...

Ashley: Well, that's the one that would've been past the church. They call it down the hill.

LeSieur: They call it down the hill, okay.

Ashley: See I graduated, that's where I graduated the last year.

LeSieur: And I mean, so, you know, that was just called down the hill, the school was?

Ashley: (Affirmative) See, Geneva graduated from Kyrack, but they had moved up to where it's at now. And I graduated down the hill. When it was still under the hill.

LeSieur: Do you know what year did they build the school up here on top of the hill or the one up the hill? The new school, I guess is what I should say.

Ashley: I guess it was, I started to say '48, I left in '47, but they might've been the class after mine. I thought mine was the last class. I thought it would've been 1947 and they moved up in '48, but I bet Geneva could tell us, she graduated from up there.

LeSieur: Okay, and another thing, you mentioned the ball diamond that was up on the hill, right. One thing that somebody had mentioned to me in another interview that I did was that there was a water tank on ball diamond hill, so I'm assuming, was where the ball diamond was, was that called ball diamond hill up there, or...

Ashley: I don't know what they called it, I, when we left school, when we left to go practice I couldn't play ball, but I could sure go along and have a big time, chase foul balls. And we'd walk up bluetown all the way up there, Red Webb was the coach, (mumble) Webb and he's glad to have us cause he could intimidate little 'ol people...

LeSieur: Well he was making you catch foul balls, too..

Ashley: Yeah, and we could run his balls down for him

LeSieur: Yeah, do you remember a water tower being up there?

Ashley: No, it seems like it vaguely I can remember a water tower up there.

LeSieur: Okay.

Ashley: But it wasn't in the ball park.

LeSieur: yeah well I mean just up on that hill there.

Ashley: it seems like I can remember one, a tall one. And that might've been water coming from that spring popped up there and headed down for the valley.

LeSieur: Okay, well, three more questions. About your, you know, childhood at Kyrock, you know, your just, tell me about some feelings you had, just generally, you know, maybe talk about some friends or fun times you had when you were a kid, you know, what was it like for you just being a kid at Kyrock?

Ashley: Well, we had, people that lived around there that lived in that village, in that camp, they was a couple of Johnsons that lived next door to us and I run with them all the time. I remember that below the Doctors office and down to Woodside they was a large bank, a gulley, we call it and I guess we spent more time sliding down that gulley on paceboard boxes or digging on that bank and they was just the local yocals, the ones that lived around in Woodside, we never got. I didn't have any friends in Ridgedale, I didn't have any friends in any of them except right there, course I wasn't there very long.

LeSieur: It was just your neighbors that you hung around, played with.

Ashley: Just the neighbors.

LeSieur: So would you describe your life at Kyrock as good, you know you...

Ashley: Well at that time to me it was good. As I look back on it, it was poverty, but it was controlled poverty. I mean, didn't worry about where the next meal's coming from, didn't worry about where clothes is coming from.

LeSieur: So you were always provided for, and...

Ashley: We were provided for, we didn't have, we weren't, we didn't have a lot, but we didn't know what a lot was.

LeSieur: Was there anything else that, you know, that we haven't covered that you'd like to add, or, I mean, how do you feel about Kyrock today would be a good question to throw in there, I mean, do you think that it should be preserved, I mean, I know you helped a lot with the book, so, you know, do you...

Ashley: Well, time marches on, if you tried to go back and redo camps and all, that's a thing of the past. History and the legacy I think should be remembered. But I don't think it'd be something that anybody would want to live over again. Like I said, we didn't suffer, but we didn't have much, but we didn't know what much was.

LeSieur: But you think it is important for people of my generation to know...

Ashley: I think its important legacy-wise and historically to, I just regret that my, I kind of regret that my kids are not more interested in where we came from.

LeSieur: Well, I'm hoping that this project that I'm working on will, you know, I hope that it can add to that memory for you.

Ashley: Well, I think that it would be an important part of history.

LeSieur: Well, I completely agree. Just from everything that I've read, it seems like Kyrock was a, you know, it was a booming place, I mean, it seemed to me that it was like more there than Brownsville at the time...

Ashley: I had a man call me the other day I don't know and he said, I just want to tell you I appreciate the work y'all did putting that book together. He said it has really been interesting to me. Now, I didn't know him from Adam. But it helped.

LeSieur: Well, what a compliment, too. It's always good to know that people appreciate the work you've done or the work you're doing.

Ashley: See I sit up there in my office, I had an office up there, when I could get up there. I set up there and I wrote down, you know, what I could remember and helped put them chapters together and it was good for me to go back over that.

LeSieur: Good memory exercise, I guess, to, to think about...

Ashley: Of course, I've still got, I'm 81, but its one thing about it, I'm as alert mentally, I think as I was when I was 51. I may, I may have forgot some short-term things, like where'd I put my glasses or where'd I put my car keys, but as far as memory, I haven't seen any signs of dementia.

LeSieur: Well, I think that happens to us all, you know, I mean, I lose my glasses, I left them in the car, I wear glasses, too, but I left them in the car, so don't feel bad about that.

Ashley: Well, I'm just saying that at 80, a lot of people have alzheimers, and their quality of life is shot, but I've had cancer, it took my ear and it took my eye, hurt my eyes and the prognosis was that I'd be a vegetable when I come out of the operation and I came out of it and asked to see my family and the family almost passed out cause they thought I was going to be a vegetable, like a vegetable.

LeSieur: Well, I'm certainly glad you're here.

Ashley: And it's been 5 year, and he released me, the one that did the cancer surgery, he released me the other day. Now I've got it in my bladder. But I'm going to start treatments next week.

LeSieur: Well, I wish you luck with that.

Ashley: You know, its just, when you get 80, tomorrow, you don't know what tomorrow is going to bring.

(Remainder of recording left out due to irrelevancy.)

LeSieur: Let's go ahead and cut this off, just so we can, it's 6:08 and we're cutting the recording.